


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: March 19, 2020

TO: ALL CITY DEPARTMENT HEADS

FROM: Shannon Hoppes, Chief Procurement Officer
Mayor's Office of Budget and Innovation 

Subject: Electronic Signature Policy

Purpose and Scope

This Citywide Electronic Signature Policy shall be implemented by all City Offices and Departments to promote efficiency, improve productivity, reduce waste, and ensure convenient and timely access to City services. This Policy furthers the City's goals to reduce the consumption of paper and the storage of paper documents.

This Policy establishes where electronic signature technology may replace a wet/manual signature, with the objective of promoting the use of paperless, electronic documents whenever appropriate and allowed by law and/or ordinance. This Policy applies to all signatures used in processing various City documents and assumes the City signer has been granted the authority to sign.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the City accepts electronic or scanned signatures as legally binding and equivalent to wet/manual signatures.

Policy

This Policy applies to contracts, documents and/or forms requiring a signature of any person where the signature is intended to show authorship, approval, authorization, or certification, as allowed by law. It is the goal of this Policy to encourage the use of electronic or scanned signatures in all internal and external activities, documents, forms, and transactions where it is operationally feasible to do so, where existing technology permits, where it is efficient to do so, and in otherwise appropriate activities based on the Department's preferences in consultation with the City Attorney's Office. In such situations, affixing an electronic or scanned signature to the document in a manner consistent with this Policy shall satisfy the City's requirements for signing a document.

Unless otherwise prohibited by law or City policy, an electronic or scanned signature shall have the same force and effect as a contract executed with an original ink signature. Departments may use electronic signatures to execute all City contracts and related documents, provided the electronic signatures are appropriate, available, and comply with applicable laws.

The term "electronic copy of a signed contract" refers to a transmission by facsimile, electronic mail, forms, documents or other electronic means of a copy of an original signed contract.

The terms "digital signature" and "electronic signature" may sound similar. However, a digital signature is a specific type of electronic signature that uses cryptography technology. In the event Departments feel that federal, state, or municipal law requires a

digital signature, Departments should seek the advice of the City Attorney's Office. Very few City documents will require digital signatures, and an electronic signature will be sufficient.

Types of Documents Permitted for Electronic and Scanned Signature

This Policy is intended to broadly support the use of electronic signatures. Departments are encouraged to consult with the City Attorney's Office if Departments are uncertain if the electronic/scanned signature is acceptable for a document. However, below are examples of the types of documents where electronic/scanned signatures are allowed:

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|---|--------------------|
| a) Memos, forms, board letters and other correspondence | Electronic/Scanned |
| b) Contracts | Electronic/Scanned |
| c) Certificates and permits | Electronic/Scanned |
| d) Notarized document | Scanned |

Please note that Ethics Forms 50 and 55 must be signed via a software that is accepted by the Ethics Commission (i.e. DocuSign, Adobe).

Definitions

Awarding Authority is any Board or Commission of the City of Los Angeles, or any authorized employee or officer of the City of Los Angeles, including the Purchasing Agent of the City of Los Angeles, who makes or enters into any contract or agreement for the provision of any goods or services of any kind or nature whatsoever for, or on behalf of, the City of Los Angeles.

Contract is any agreement, franchise, lease or concession, including agreements for any occasional professional or technical personal services, for the performance of any work or service, the provision of any materials or supplies, or the rendition of any service to the City of Los Angeles or to the public, which is let, awarded or entered into with, or on behalf of, the City of Los Angeles or any awarding authority thereof. Contracts where the provisions of this article would conflict with federal or state grant funded contracts, or conflict with the terms of the grant or subvention.

Digital Signature is a specific signature technology implementation of electronic signature that uses cryptography [i.e. Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) technology to issue digital certification] to provide additional proof of the identity of the signer and integrity of a document. PKI technology is accepted by the California Secretary of State for digital signatures created by public entities. As noted above, digital signatures will not be required for most City contracts, documents, or forms.

Electronic Record is a record created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means.

Electronic Signature is an electronic identifier, created by computer, attached or affixed to or logically associated with an electronic record, executed or adopted by a person with the intention of using it to have the same force and effect as the use of a manual signature.

Electronic Transaction is a transaction conducted or performed, in whole or in part, by electronic means or electronic records

Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) is a set of roles, policies, hardware, software and procedures needed to create, manage, distribute, use, store and revoke digital certificates and manage public-key encryption.

Scanned Signature is a manual signature that has been placed on a document that has been scanned into an electronic record.

Signature is a mark or sign (including a full name, initial, or identifying) made by an individual on an instrument or document to signify knowledge, approval, acceptance, or obligation.